

**Koster, Emlyn**

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**From:** Skvarla, John  
**Sent:** Friday, August 09, 2013 5:31 PM  
**To:** Skvarla, John  
**Subject:** Exempt Designation

Dear DENR Leaders,

First of all, I apologize for sending this email late on a Friday. The reason I'm sending it now is because you may see stories in the news media regarding this issue over the weekend, and I didn't want to wait until next week to communicate with you.

I hope that by now you will have noticed that my management style is to surround myself with the best possible people and to reward initiative, leadership, dedication, and creativity. I have found plenty of folks with those qualities here at DENR.

As you probably know, the legislature has approved a number of new exempt positions within DENR. Your position is one that will be designated exempt. Next week you will receive a bureaucratic memorandum informing you of the change, but before you received that I wanted to elucidate the way I see this development and how I intend to use it.

Many say that the original SPA limit on exempt designations was instituted by a previous legislature to protect a political bureaucracy. Some have denounced the current legislature's actions as an attempt to build a political bureaucracy. But I'm neither a politician nor a bureaucrat, and that's not how I will manage while I am secretary of this department.

I see this designation of your position as exempt as a badge of distinction of which you should be proud. I know not all of you will agree with that sentiment, but I see an exempt managerial or policy-making designation as a mark of leadership. It was always silly to pretend that only 30 or so people in a department of nearly 4,000 were making managerial decisions. DENR has more than 600 managers, and the majority of those carry the responsibility necessary to operate our agency.

What is most important is how the change in designation will be used. **As I have said all along, I do not intend wholesale changes in DENR's management.** I said this long before I knew that the number of exempt positions would increase, and I reiterate it now. There will be changes, of course. But as you have seen since January, we will make changes based on competency, efficiency, performance and changing requirements, not based on politics.

**I am sure you have heard me describe DENR as a community of science. At all levels, our leadership is composed of scientists and professionals who are passionate about what we do. It would be not only irresponsible, but truly impossible to replace the knowledge, experience, and dedication of our key managers on any wholesale basis.**

Our leaders in DENR are the most important ambassadors for our mission to protect the environment and revitalize the economy of our beloved state. I am honored to have you join me in that journey and confident that you will be even more proud to serve DENR going forward as you have been thus far.

Sincerely,

John

John E. Skvarla, III  
Secretary  
North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
1601 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1601

## Braswell, Alvin

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**From:** Koster, Emlyn  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 15, 2013 2:38 PM  
**To:** Lowman, Meg; Kroll, David; Braswell, Alvin; Cryan, Jason R; Campbell, Roy; Johnson, Mark D  
**Cc:** davis, amber; Oakley, Laura H  
**Subject:** Recent memo from Secretary Skvarla  
**Attachments:** image001.png  
  
**Importance:** High

Alvin, David, Jason, Mark, Meg and Roy,

Pursuant to Secretary Skvarla's email at 5:31 pm last Friday concerning Exempt Designation, and which I subsequently learned you were among its six (other than myself) recipients at the Museum, Amber will be delivering the original and copy of the Secretary's initialed follow-up email to you this afternoon. Please sign and date both, keep the original and return the copy to Amber who will relay it to Laura for your personnel file.

At next Monday's Management Team meeting, this matter will be a brief agenda item with Laura joining us. Meanwhile, please know that I had no prior awareness of these notifications in either their general or individual contexts. Also, if you have any questions, please address them to both Laura and me.

Emlyn

Emlyn Koster, PhD  
Director, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences  
11 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601  
919.707.9801  
[emlyn.koster@naturalsciences.org](mailto:emlyn.koster@naturalsciences.org)



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## **Koster, Emlyn**

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**From:** Braswell, Alvin  
**Sent:** Friday, August 16, 2013 10:39 AM  
**To:** Lowman, Meg; Koster, Emlyn; Oakley, Laura H  
**Cc:** Braswell, Alvin; Betsy Bennett  
**Subject:** RE: Recent memo from Secretary Skvarla

Meg,

Let me clarify a conversation with Betsy Bennett with regard to the designation of Museum staff as exempt from the personnel act (EPA). I simply asked for Betsy's opinion on possible impact to the Museum that might result from this personnel action. That was done because Betsy has extensive experience with the museum community nationally and with museum accrediting organizations. Of course, it would be inappropriate for me to ask for or for her to take an active role with this issue. Any objection (appeal) to any of the designations must be done on an individual basis and must go through the official channels outlined in the letter you received. Signature acknowledging receipt of the letter should be done immediately. To do otherwise would complicate and dilute any points associated with requested modifications to the exempt status of employees, if they are to be made.

Alvin

Alvin Braswell, Deputy Museum Director for Operations  
N.C. State Museum of Natural Sciences  
11 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601-1029

Mail:  
N.C. State Museum of Natural Sciences  
MSC 1626  
Raleigh, NC 27699

Shipping:  
N.C. State Museum of Natural Sciences  
100 N. Salisbury Street  
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Phone: 919-707-9803  
Work Cell: 919-218-6763  
Fax: 919-733-1573  
e-mail: [Alvin.Braswell@naturalsciences.org](mailto:Alvin.Braswell@naturalsciences.org)

<http://www.naturalsciences.org>

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**From:** Lowman, Meg  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 15, 2013 4:00 PM  
**To:** Koster, Emlyn; Braswell, Alvin  
**Subject:** RE: Recent memo from Secretary Skvarla

I had heard that Alvin was in conversation with Betsy to try to get this reversed for the Museum, so should we postpone the signatures?

Thanks for any communication,  
meg

Margaret (Meg) Lowman, PhD  
Senior Scientist, Director of Academic Partnerships & Global Initiatives  
North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences  
Research Professor, North Carolina State University  
11 West Jones Street  
Raleigh NC 27601  
(919) 707-9288  
[www.canopymeg.com](http://www.canopymeg.com)  
[meg.lowman@naturalsciences.org](mailto:meg.lowman@naturalsciences.org)

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**From:** Koster, Emlyn  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 15, 2013 2:38 PM  
**To:** Lowman, Meg; Kroll, David; Braswell, Alvin; Cryan, Jason R; Campbell, Roy; Johnson, Mark D  
**Cc:** davis, amber; Oakley, Laura H  
**Subject:** Recent memo from Secretary Skvarla  
**Importance:** High

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Pursuant to Secretary Skvarla's email at 5:31 pm last Friday concerning Exempt Designation, and which I subsequently learned you were among its six (other than myself) recipients at the Museum, Amber will be delivering the original and copy of the Secretary's initialed follow-up email to you this afternoon. Please sign and date both, keep the original and return the copy to Amber who will relay it to Laura for your personnel file.

At next Monday's Management Team meeting, this matter will be a brief agenda item with Laura joining us. Meanwhile, please know that I had no prior awareness of these notifications in either their general or individual contexts. Also, if you have any questions, please address them to both Laura and me.

Emlyn

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Director, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences  
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[emlyn.koster@naturalsciences.org](mailto:emlyn.koster@naturalsciences.org)



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## **Braswell, Alvin**

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**From:** Koster, Emlyn  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2013 6:55 AM  
**To:** Ives, Brad  
**Cc:** Braswell, Alvin; Cryan, Jason R; Oakley, Laura H  
**Subject:** FW: Exempt Status Managers

Brad - Herewith a copy of my letter to Bryan, sent just now - Emlyn

Emlyn Koster

Director, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences

11 West Jones Street

Raleigh, NC 27601

919.707.9801

[emlyn.koster@naturalsciences.org](mailto:emlyn.koster@naturalsciences.org)

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**From:** Koster, Emlyn  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2013 6:52 AM  
**To:** Stuart, Bryan  
**Cc:** Braswell, Alvin; Cryan, Jason R; Oakley, Laura H  
**Subject:** Exempt Status Managers

Dear Bryan,

I hear your heartfelt concern arising from the State's recent announcement of widened exempt status across the Public Service and the inclusion of six members (in addition to myself) of the Museum's Management Team.

As the Museum's Director, and after consultation with senior internal and DENR officials, it is my prerogative to direct you not to take this matter into your own hands, in any internal and/or external way(s), either on behalf of those affected or of the Museum as a whole. Each affected individual needs to promptly acknowledge receipt of Secretary Skvarla's notification about their change in status and explanation of their appeal and other rights. You need, please, to remove yourself from any communications associated with the appeal process and instead rely on the Museum's leadership and management to handle this delicate situation.

If and when there arises any compelling avenue for a one-Museum appeal – because, for example, of accreditation standards in the museum profession – it will be for me to coordinate it with the Deputy Museum Directors and the Museum's HR Manager in concert with DENR Division, Legal and HR officials, and then for me to communicate accordingly, as and when appropriate, with affected Museum staff.

I appreciate that your thoughts are driven by dedication to the Museum's mission. As public servants accountable to the State though, I need you to please understand and comply with the direction of the preceding paragraphs.

Kindly confirm your receipt of this email.

Sincerely, Emlyn

Emlyn Koster, PhD

Director, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences

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## Koster, Emlyn

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**From:** Stuart, Bryan  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2013 8:05 AM  
**To:** Koster, Emlyn  
**Subject:** Re: Exempt Status Managers

Dear Emlyn,

I have received your email.

Sincerely,  
Bryan

On Aug 19, 2013, at 6:52 AM, "Koster, Emlyn" <[emlyn.koster@naturalsciences.org](mailto:emlyn.koster@naturalsciences.org)> wrote:

Dear Bryan,

I hear your heartfelt concern arising from the State's recent announcement of widened exempt status across the Public Service and the inclusion of six members (in addition to myself) of the Museum's Management Team.

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Sincerely, Emlyn

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## **Koster, Emlyn**

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**From:** Cryan, Jason R  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2013 9:39 AM  
**To:** Stuart, Bryan; Koster, Emlyn  
**Cc:** Braswell, Alvin; Oakley, Laura H  
**Subject:** RE: Exempt Status Managers

Hi Bryan,

Thanks again for your concerns relating to the potential effects of this status change on the Museum...which, I assure you, we do understand and are considering.

We also appreciate your perspective that this information is important for the Museum staff to know about; Emlyn is in the process now of drafting a communication to the entire Museum to apprise everyone of the factual information and to assure the staff that this topic is being carefully considered by the Museum's Management Team. As you so rightly observed, we share the same goals.

Cheers,

Jason

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Jason R. Cryan, Ph.D.  
Deputy Museum Director for Research & Collections North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences  
11 W. Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601

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Phone: (919) 707-9933  
Fax: (919) 715-2614  
email: [jason.cryan@naturalsciences.org](mailto:jason.cryan@naturalsciences.org)  
Museum Website: [www.naturalsciences.org](http://www.naturalsciences.org)  
Research Website: [www.planthopper.com](http://www.planthopper.com)

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-----Original Message-----

From: Stuart, Bryan  
Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2013 9:29 AM  
To: Koster, Emlyn  
Cc: Braswell, Alvin; Cryan, Jason R; Oakley, Laura H  
Subject: Re: Exempt Status Managers

Dear Emlyn et al.,

My intention was to rally support behind the seven of you, and to offer myself as a non-exempt (and therefore less vulnerable) employee who is willing to raise the importance of maintaining this research integrity with our leadership. I was also intending to host an open conversation with the research staff so as to elevate the conversation above hallway gossip, where it stands now. We have received no in-house communications on this matter, but read the newspaper. As you feel these actions would be more harmful than good, I will certainly not follow through on them. This is why I wrote you all before taking any action. We share the same goal.

As I sign out of this conversation, I wish you all the best of luck with the issue. If there comes time for a role for me as a non-exempt museum scientist, then please do let me know.

Sincerely,  
Bryan

On Aug 19, 2013, at 6:52 AM, "Koster, Emlyn" <[emlyn.koster@naturalsciences.org](mailto:emlyn.koster@naturalsciences.org)> wrote:

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**Koster, Emlyn**

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**From:** Koster, Emlyn  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2013 12:14 PM  
**To:** DENR-MNS  
**Subject:** Update

Colleagues,

Six members of the Museum's Management Team (Alvin, David, Jason, Mark, Meg and Roy) were recently notified by DENR Secretary John Skvarla that the Legislature has allocated new exempt positions within DENR and that their positions are now of this type (my position was already classified as exempt from the time of my appointment). Such a designation means that the position is not subject to the Personnel Act. I wish to assure you that each affected individual has been officially notified of their change in status and also informed of their appeal rights.

Widened exempt status across the Public Service has caused concern among some Museum staff: I understand. One potential overall concern for the Museum would be any impact of exempt status on its accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, and perhaps by some other associations as well. If and when there arises any compelling avenue for a one-Museum appeal, it will be for me to coordinate it with the Deputy Museum Directors and the Museum's HR Manager in concert with DENR Division, Legal and HR officials, and then for me to communicate accordingly with affected Museum staff.

Please do not launch any external communications associated with this matter: any such action would contravene State policy. I appreciate that the thoughts and any concerns you may have regarding the exemption of certain positions are driven by a dedication to the Museum's mission. As public servants accountable to the State though, I need you to please understand and comply with the direction of the preceding paragraphs.

Thank you, Emlyn

Emlyn Koster, PhD  
Director, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences  
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## Braswell, Alvin

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**To:** Stuart, Bryan  
**Cc:** Braswell, Alvin; Cryan, Jason R; Oakley, Laura H  
**Subject:** RE: Exempt Status Managers

All aspects of your gracious follow-up note, Bryan, are much appreciated - Emlyn

-----Original Message-----

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Bryan

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> Director, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences

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